<u>In the Claims</u>:

Please cancel claim 6 without prejudice and amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A method of embedding a watermark into a halftone image[, the image comprising a cluster of halftone dots], said method comprising [the steps of]:

   providing a watermark to alter the [cluster of] halftone dots by toggling boundary pixels of the halftone dots, <u>wherein the halftone dots are represented as primitives comprising contiguous clusters of halftone pixels</u>; and

   embedding the watermark in the image <u>by growing or shrinking the primitives through the toggling of the boundary pixels</u>.

2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of embedding comprises the step of gradually changing the halftone dots.

3. (Currently amended) <u>A method of embedding a watermark into a halftone image, said method comprising</u>:

   <u>providing a watermark to alter a cluster of halftone dots by toggling boundary pixels of the halftone dots; and embedding the watermark in the image, including</u> [The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of] toggling boundary pixels on or off to grow or shrink the halftone dots.

4. (Currently amended) An apparatus to embed a watermark in a halftone image, said apparatus comprising:

   <u>means for receiving an image including primitives comprising contiguous clusters of halftone pixels; and</u>

   an encoder to toggle halftone data values at an outer boundary of a cluster of halftone pixels[dots] of the [halftone] image<u>, the encoder operable to grow or shrink the cluster at the outer boundary to embed an element of the watermark in the image</u>.

-4-

5. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said encoder effects a change in the image's luminance.

6. Cancelled.